

value of the dollar make the situation more difficult in respect of our exports and easier in respect of imports.

There can be only difficulty ahead. The government does not make known its intentions in respect of dealing with these serious problems. I do not think it is possible to debate this particular piece of legislation intelligently without knowing what the government has in mind and how it intends to face the over-all situation. The talk at this time about repatriation of the constitution is so much rhetoric. It is like saying we should paint the lifeboat while the main boat is sinking.

In this bill the government really has neglected the interests of the provinces. It has given no indication of an attempt to reach agreement with the provinces. The reduction in the amount of money available will mean a reduction in the services the provinces can provide. The government has not indicated that it has even attempted to reach an agreement with the provinces. The action has been unilateral. It has been indicated by other members that the government intends to go to these provincial conferences with a *fait accompli*, saying that the provinces will be cut back unilaterally.

This is one of the most anti-provincial pieces of legislation we have seen. The BNA act gave the provinces jurisdiction in respect of health, welfare, and education. I feel that, on the whole, this was a wise move even if 100 years later we have a different social order. What was not clear at that time was that the federal government would usurp most of the tax structure to its own advantage. In effect the provinces have been left with large social problems and debts in respect of the provision of health, welfare, and education, without the corresponding tax structure with which to take care of them.

There have been a series of agreements whereby the wealthier provinces, through the tax structure, have given to the less wealthy provinces grants from taxes collected through the federal treasury. This has reduced some of the strain on Confederation. In my opinion the usurpation of health, welfare, and partially education, has created the greatest strain we have had on Confederation. I think the federal government of ten years ago decided the provinces were not to be trusted to look after their citizens to the best of their ability, and therefore they were not to be trusted to evolve medical care plans, health care plans or hospital plans that would be suitable.

The government forced on the provinces the most expensive type of hospital and medical care plans, on a 50-50 basis, whereby a province which would not take advantage of every health service found that its citizens were contributing to the general tax structure in Ottawa but were not receiving from it. The shared-cost program lead to over-expansion and over-utilization.

The government has given no hint concerning what it thinks the health care situation should be and how the provinces can carry the burden of health care. Is it willing to give up tax points and, if so, how many? Is it willing to make uncommitted grants which the provinces may use as they see fit? I agree that the cost of health care, medical care, and particularly hospital care, is severe. It is a problem that must be faced by this country. But there is no point in merely trying to attempt to slough off the burden on to the provinces which already are over-burdened and

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which do not have the tax structure with which to continue.

We shall have to make some decisions. The government must accept guilt for the burden of programs that are beyond the ability of the tax structure to bear. This bill should not pass until the government has given some indication of the situation this country is in and the serious financial burdens that are ahead of us.

**Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the filibuster in respect to Bill C-68 with increasing puzzlement. We have heard statements of how the government is about to do dreadful things to sick people.

What has been proposed in fact is that, instead of having the present open-ended situation in respect of health costs, some reasonable figure should be set. The escalation being discussed is 14½ per cent the first year, 11 per cent or 12 per cent the second year, and 10 per cent thereafter. These really are not ungenerous figures. They are figures which run ahead of inflation. They are in line with the whole thrust of medical practice at the present time which is very much in the direction of looking at preventive medicine and the low cost alternatives which often are alternatives that best suit the sick person, such as care in the home with additional nursing care, rather than the use of expensive teaching hospital resources which are sometimes inappropriate and unnecessary.

● (1650)

We find that the Canadian Medical Association is quite ready to join the government in looking at constructive alternatives. The president of CMA appeared before the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs and indicated a willingness to try to find ways of reducing costs while not reducing the quality of care.

Opposition members have also been saying that they want to see more efficiency in government sponsored programs and a reduction in government spending. That being so, it is a puzzle to me why they are not prepared to allow this bill to go to committee where amendments can be made and where, if the bill is as imperfect as they say, it can be improved.

With regard to the motion under Standing Order 75C, we have heard very harsh words about the government imposing legislation under the provisions of that Standing Order. What has in fact happened? The request is that the bill be sent to committee for a careful clause by clause examination, which surely must be an improvement on the broad generalities which we have heard from the opposition in the debate up to now. If the bill is imperfect, then surely what the opposition should want is to send it to committee where it can be improved by amendment. There will be opportunities for amending it again at the report stage or on third reading.

We have also heard much said this afternoon about respect for parliament, but how can the public respect parliament if parliament continues to be as inefficient as this in doing its business? Some of the opposition members who have been here for 20 years may not realize how the system appears to those of us who have come here more recently and who have really been surprised at the repeti-